

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for providing a virtual replenishing of a supply item with an imaging substance includes the steps communicating to a database a first serial number associated with a first supply item; comparing the first serial number with a plurality of serial numbers stored in the database; receiving from the database one of a
5 first data indicating non-correspondence between the first serial number with one of the plurality of serial numbers and a second data indicating correspondence between the first serial number with one of the plurality of serial numbers, wherein the second data includes a verification key; and if the verification key corresponds to the first key stored in the memory associated with the first supply item, then performing the step of
10 allocating at least a portion of a surplus amount of the imaging substance contained in the first supply item for use.